

REMARKS

Claim 1-8, 10, and 32-37, which were rejected by the Examiner and affirmed by the Board, have been cancelled. Claims 9 and 11-31 were previously cancelled. Claims 38-40 have been placed in independent form. New claims 41-50, which distinguish the invention from the prior art, are presented.

New claims 41-50 include additional subject matter that was not before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. Summarizing claim 41, for example, which is the only independent claim, the invention concerns an apparatus for remotely selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a plurality of gaming machines. The apparatus comprises a plurality of electrical operable lock mechanisms. Each of the lock mechanisms is respectively associated with one of the plurality of physical areas of each of the gaming machines. Each of the lock mechanisms is physically moveable between unlock and locked conditions with respect to its associated area.

There is control circuitry that is independent of the gaming machines. The control circuitry includes a processor operating under control of a stored program. The processor is coupled to each of the lock mechanism via a communication link for controlling operation of the lock mechanism.

A data storage and retrieval system is adapted to communicate with the processor. This system includes a storage medium for storing data including machine identification data for each of a plurality of gaming machines, personnel identification data for all personnel having access to one or more of the gaming machines, and access authorization data indicative of the gaming machines and the physical areas, if any, of each of the gaming machines for which a person seeking access to the gaming machine is authorized.

A data input device is coupled to the processor. The data input device enables a person to input at least personnel identification data that identifies the person.

The processor is operable to compare the personnel identification data inputted by the person with the personnel identification data stored by the storage media that authorizes access by certain, identified personnel to certain designated gaming machines of the plurality of gaming machines and to a plurality, but not all, of the physical areas of the designated gaming machines. This would cause the lock mechanism of the plurality of physical areas to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those plurality of physical areas of the designated gaming machines when the personnel identification data inputted by the person matches any of the personnel identification data stored by the storage medium. Further, apparatus is provided for monitoring the condition of the lock mechanism.

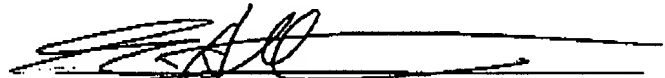
In one embodiment as set forth in claim 42, each of the lock mechanisms comprises a lock bolt moveable between unlocked and locked positions of the door. The monitoring apparatus comprises apparatus for monitoring the conditions of the door and the lock bolt. The monitoring apparatus includes the control circuitry, a first transducer apparatus associated with the door and coupled to the control circuitry for sensing the condition of the door and generating a first output signal indicative of the condition of the door. A second transducer apparatus is associated with the lock bolt and is coupled to the control circuitry for sensing the condition of the lock bolt and for generating a second output signal indicative of the condition of the lock bolt. A processor program is responsive to the first and second output signals for storing data indicative of the conditions of the door and the lock bolt.

NOV 16 2009

As set forth in claim 44, the first transducer apparatus and the second transducer apparatus include optical apparatus. In claim 45, the optical apparatus includes an optical emitter and an optical receiver. In claim 50, there is an optical pathway between the optical emitter and the optical receiver, with the optical pathway being alterable in response to manual operation of the lock bolt.

As a result of the Board's decision, claims 38-40 (now in independent form) are allowable. Claims 41-50 are not taught by Luciano or Henry or any other prior art cited by the Examiner, whether taken singly or in combination with each other. In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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